

WELLINGTON WEIR – 23 July, 2008

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:00): My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Is the government planning to announce the building of a weir at Wellington to allow for the inundation of sea water into the Lower Lakes, and has the water level trigger for building the weir changed from around minus 1.5 AHD to another water level trigger linked to the ecological survival of the Lower Lakes?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (15:00): I thank the member for Hammond for his question, and I understand his sincere concern for the communities of the Lower Lakes, as this government shares that concern. There are some serious issues in the Lower Lakes that we have to deal with. A huge body of work is being undertaken by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission at the request of the ministerial council to determine the medium and long-term management options for the Lower Lakes.

There are some serious issues emerging in relation to acid sulphate soils. Some work is being undertaken by various organisations, which is being fed into that process. We are expecting the draft report to be concluded in the not too distant future, and it will be considered by commissioners and, shortly afterwards, by ministers. Once that information has been presented to ministers, I will certainly be working with those communities on what we need to do to deal with the longer term and short-term issues of the Lower Lakes.